Eastern and Central Idaho April 1 Water Supply and Flood Potential Outlook

With abundant snow pack in the mountains for the first time since 1997 and the spring snowmelt season upon Eastern Idaho, the time is now to prepare for potential flooding in many areas.

Precipitation
March Precipitation was 121% of normal for five Automated Surface Observing Systems (ASOS) in Eastern Idaho and 133% of normal for the 2006 Water Year. The representative stations follow:

Station	March Percent Normal	Water Year Normal
Burley	143.5	131.9
Challis	56.9	102.0
Idaho Falls	117.9	108.9
Pocatello	123.9	126.2
Stanley	132.8	163.7
Regional Average	121.4	133.3

As of the end of March, mountain snow water equivalent (SWE) is averaging 126% of normal for the 2006 Water Year for Eastern Idaho Basins. The basin summary follows:

Basin	Snow Water Equivalent Percent Normal
Big Wood	131
Little Wood	142
Big Lost	134
Little Lost	114
Henry's Teton	119
Snake above Palisades	108
Blackfoot, Portneuf	121
Oakley	145
Bear	119
Regional Average	126

Water Supply
According to the April 1, 2006 Water Supply Outlook by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), much of Eastern Idaho's streamflow forecasts look the best since 1997. The Upper Snake and Bear River basins are forecast at 113% and 119% of normal, respectively, while the Big Wood and Southside Snake River basins are forecast near the highest in the state at 148% and 188% of normal, respectively.

The most probable, maximum and minimum April through September forecast summaries for each of the basins follow.

Note: Only the minimum forecast for the Upper Snake and the Bear River basins are slightly below normal flows with all other forecasts above normal, indicating the likelihood for flooding.

Basin	Most Probable (KAF)	Percent Average	Maximum	Minimum	30-Year Average (KAF)
Wood and Lost River	250	148	179	119	165
Upper Snake	1843	113	129	97	1645
Southside Snake River	314	188	234	148	167
Bear River	193	119	144	94	163

For more information regarding the April 1 NRCS Water Supply Outlook, please visit their web site at www.id.nrcs.usda.gov/snow/watersupply

Long-Range Forecast
According to the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlook for May, June and July, temperatures are expected to be above normal for Eastern Idaho. The CPC precipitation forecast calls for an equal chance to be at, above or below normal for same period.

Reservoir Status
The Upper Snake River Bureau of Reclamation system, which includes Jackson Lake, Palisades, Grassy Lake, Island Park, Ririe, American Falls and Lake Walcott, is at 72 % of capacity. The total space available is 1,136,190 acre-feet and the total storage capacity is 4,045,695 acre-feet.

Flood Potential Outlook
According to the April 8, 2006 Peak Flow Forecast by the National Weather Service Northwest River Forecast Center, the Henry's Fork near Rexburg and the Portneuf Rivers are forecast to rise above flood stage and cause minor flooding.

Below are the most probable discharge and peak flows and representative flood stages for eight of ten river forecast points in Eastern Idaho.

Forecast Point	Discharge	Peak Stage	Flood Stage
Henry's Fork at St. Anthony	8200	6.6	7.0
Teton near Driggs	1576	3.6	5.0
Big Wood at Hailey	3400	5.4	6.0
Snake near Heise	22600	7.3	8.0
Portneuf at Pocatello	**1200**	**8.9**	**8.5**
Henry's Fork near Rexburg	**8800**	**9.8**	**9.5**
Snake near Shelley	22700	11.0	12.0
Teton near St. Anthony	4300	5.6	6.0

Spring Climate
The wild card during spring snowmelt is the weather. A rapid warming in temperatures will cause rapid snowmelt and river to rise quickly. A warm and wet spring is the worst case. This scenario will have the same influence on rivers with the additional precipitation adding to the mix causing a further increase in river levels and the potential for flooding. The ideal scenario is a cool spring with occasional precipitation to keep the rivers flowing and the reservoirs filling.

Flood Safety
Planning and preparation are the best defenses against flooding. Make sure flood plans are current and ready to employ and know your community flood plans. And remember, when near any rivers or streams when water levels are high or anticipated to rise, be alert and never drive through moving water – turn around don't drown.

For complete weather and hydrologic information, visit the National Weather Service web page at www.weather.gov/pocatello